

**Asia TEFL International Conference**  
***TEFL in Asia: Emerging Issues***

Hotel Nongshim, Busan, South Korea  
November 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, 2003

<b>Paper Title</b>	<b>Quality ELT in Distance Learning Programmes: A Malaysian Case Study</b>
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**ABSTRACT**

Recent developments in technology-driven education have shifted the focus from teacher /classroom-directed learning to self-paced and self-directed learning. Tertiary-level distance learning programmes now utilize and provide greater access to information that is delivered online or through distance learning means, thus reducing time spent on face-to-face interaction. However, these developments pose several challenges for ELT professionals, especially in relation to effective teaching and learning. This paper presents the findings of related research on ELT in a distance learning programme in the Malaysian context. The paper highlights several issues that are being addressed with respect to assuring quality in distance learning programmes.

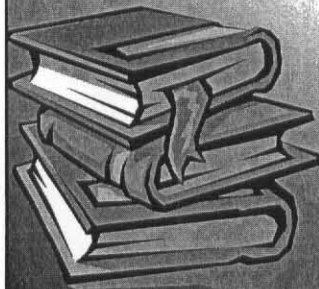
# QUALITY ELT IN DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMMES A MALAYSIAN CASE STUDY

*Paper presented at the First Asia  
TEFL International Conference*

*Busan, South Korea*

*7-9 November 2003*

*Kuldip Kaur*



OPEN UNIVERSITY  
UNIVERSITI TERBUKA  
MALAYSIA



• 18 Universities

## Scenario

• Open University Malaysia

- Set up in 2000
- 13,000 students
- 6 Undergraduate programmes
- 3 Graduate programmes

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## Programmes in Focus

- *Malaysian University English Test Preparatory Course*
- *715 students; 48 tutors in 16 centres*
- *B.Ed. TESL*
- *4,000 students; 200 tutors in 32 centres*

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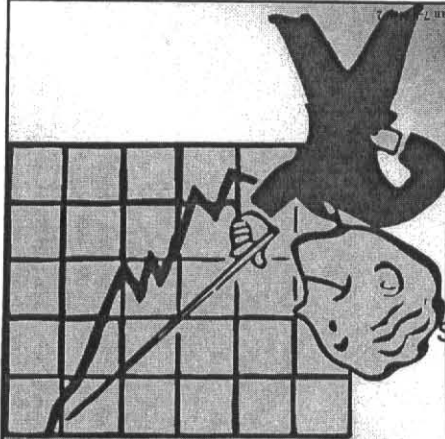
## Maintaining Quality

***Dealing with people in the most agreeable of environments with the most enlightened of managements is still the most challenging of tasks.***

Crosby, Philip B. (1996:167).  
Quality is Still Free. NY: McGraw-Hill.

## Key Tutor Training Areas

- Face to face tutoring skills
- Colloquia and other academic activity
- Academic counseling skills
- Online tutoring & LMS skills
- Information skills
- Assessment techniques
- Course management
- Communication skills



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## Quality in Distance Learning Programmes

*Learners at any age can benefit from the following:*

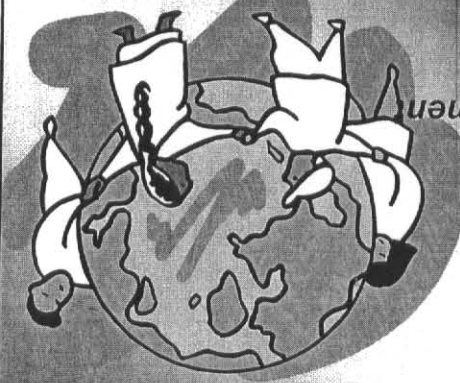
- a thoughtful learning environment
- seeing or hearing what is actually done to execute cognitive operations
- guidance and support of students' initial efforts until they can perform tasks on their own initiative and in a self-directed way

Beyer, B. K. (1997: 5) *Improving Student Thinking*.  
Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon

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## Key Learner Training Areas

- Learning and interaction during face to face sessions
- Online tutoring and the LMS
- Information skills
- Managing assignments
- Time management skills
- Examinations and assessments

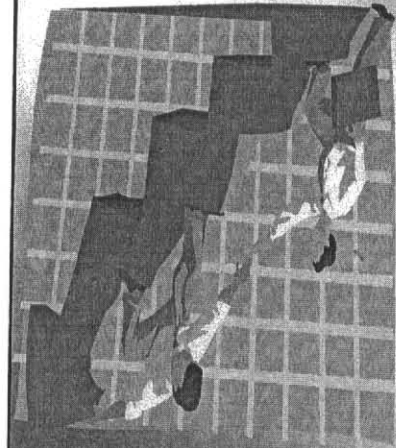


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## A thoughtful learning environment

### Thoughtful Tutors:

- academic preparedness
- academic counseling
- encourage discussion, query
- analysis and evaluation
- focused on learner potential
- multi-technique teaching

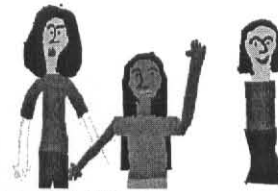


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## Seeing or hearing what is actually done to execute cognitive operations

- ☛ Teacher as a learner in the English language classroom
- ☛ Adult-learning focused on improving power of observation
- ☛ Active learning communities



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## Guidance and support of students' initial efforts until they can perform tasks on their own initiative and in a self-directed way

### Instructional Scaffolding:

- ☛ tailor-made print materials
- ☛ online interaction and tutorial support
- ☛ sub-goaling: tutorial questions
- ☛ increasing learner ownership



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## Tutor Understanding

- *With OUM students I find that they have a problem with comprehension. Sometimes they don't understand the module. I read and do mind maps for them. I give them the handouts with the mind maps or charts and then they get the big picture, how things are connected to one another. I don't expect everything to change with this, but at least it helps.*
- *Adult learners also need a lot of guidance. A lot of tutors think they can rehash what is in the module but I think the students fall asleep. I give them guidance and I get them involved and I think they are able to follow the lesson.*

*Sukesh, 22 years' ELT experience*



## Doing what helps

*My tutor gave me lots of exercises on paper and for speaking. When we want to do a writing exercise, she will discuss and share a lot of ideas on the topic.*

*Maziah, 23, Bachelor of Management*



## Tutor Involvement

- *I try to lessen the distance between student and teacher. You are dealing with adults and they want to talk to you. I tell them stories. I tell them about what I did what my father did. Sometimes they like to have a tap on the shoulder.*
- *I try to have handouts—things they can see; charts; I do a lot of poster work. This gets them all involved. My students call what I carry a “cute kit” which has paper, pencils, scissors...I take newspapers to class. Even the older students like posters.*

*Sukesh, 22 years' ELT experience*



## Socio-emotional Perspective

*The basic thing about them is that they are adults and they are thinkers. They come in very nervous as they have academic material which they have not been in touch with for a long time. One thing I have to do is to boost their confidence.*

*They come in thinking they are not going to be able to do it. They feel shy of the fact that they are experienced in their jobs but have to bring up a silly small question. I as a tutor think of the weak students in my adolescent class and I notice adult students also have the same problems. Sometimes I begin with the “stupid” question and then they also ask questions.*

*Anna Cherubin, 25 years' ELT experience*





## I prefer to be corrected...

- Whenever we do wrong in speaking, the tutor will correct us immediately.
- I feel I improved by taking the MUET class. The tutor gave us a lot of exercises. She will ask us to sit and be in groups and we have group speaking and talk in front of her. She will give us a topic and she will ask us to talk on that. For listening lessons she brought a lot of tapes that helped us a lot.
- She is very friendly and I don't feel afraid. We can very freely ask her what we want. She will give us homework and immediately she will correct it and give it to us and tell us what is wrong.

Parames, 43, Bachelor of Management



## Understanding the Learner

- They also don't have much time. You have to find the right methodology.
- I provide all the necessary things. I give the answers in a sealed envelope. Those who have time try the exercises first then open the envelop for answers. Those who don't have time, learn from the answers
- During the holidays, I give them work without the answers. Then I send them the answers in the mail.

Anna Cherubin, 25 years' ELT experience



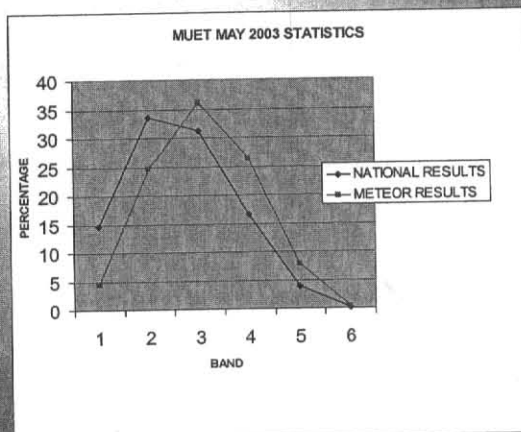
## Learning English

- She corrected all my grammar mistakes. Especially on the writings. When I write I make a lot of mistakes. She helped me with public speaking. She correct me when I'm not quite sure.
- She gave me confidence in public speaking. She increased my confidence.
- We know English but our weakness is in grammar and spelling. And how to create a correct sentence in proper English. Sometimes we sound like Malay-English or Singapore-English or it just doesn't sound English. The tutors correct it immediately and so we learn from there.
- Like "I'm too painful lah" but it should be "I'm in pain."

Liza, 39, Bachelor of Management



## Performance Outcomes



## Quality ELT

*All can learn; all can drink of this lake. It is given to few to add to the store of knowledge, to strike new springs of thought, or to shape new forms of beauty...the future of the world lies in the hands of those who are able to carry the interpretation of nature a step further than their predecessors; so certain is it that the highest function of a university is to seek out those men, cherish them, and give their ability to serve their kind full play.*

Thomas Henry Huxley. (1825-1895)  
An Address on University Education

## Thank you



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## Appendices A

### Enrollment Number & Rates of Employed in MDE (thousand persons, %)

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Total Num.	28.6	166	320	635	915
Total Rates	90%	90%	70%	94%	97%
Regular HEI	1.6	10	62	234	289
	52%	49%	35%	85%	90%
CCRTVU	27	156	258	401	626
	96%	95%	94%	100%	100%

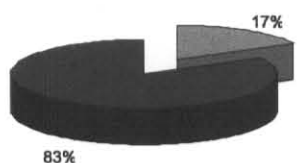
## Scale

Basic Statistics Of MDE					
	Pilot Univ.	Enrolled Student	Learning Center	Learning Center of PSS*	New Added MCW**
1999	5	32,000			223
2000	26	185,000			593
2001	14	456,000	966		2,236
2002	22	675,000	2,012	25	3,217
2003	1	949,792	2,347	117	3,776
Total	68	2,301,305	2,347	142	10,045

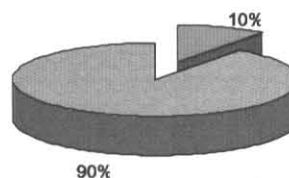
•\*PSS: Public Service System  
 •\*\*MCW: Multimedia Courseware

## Speed Increases Continuously

- The size of MDE in China is expanded continuously.



Percentage of students enrolled in DE among all universities in 2003



Percentage of students of DE among all universities

**This shows the speed of MDE doesn't weaken.**



## Graduates

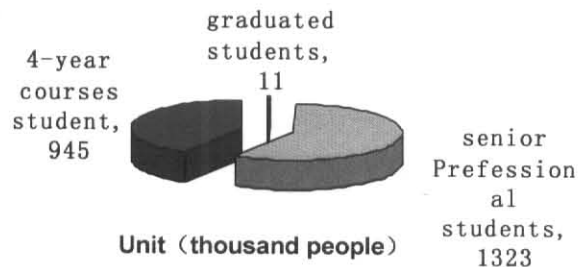
The Statistic Of MDE Graduates

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004
Total	539	32641	153708	186888
Regular Colleges	539	1305	19422	21266
CCRTVU	0	31336	134286	165622

- By now, there are nearly 1.9 M students graduated from about 27 Universities including Beijing University, Hunan University, Central China Technology University, Zhejiang University and CCRTVU etc.. The number of CCRTVU students upgrading from junior college to university is up to 165 thousand in the academic year of 2002 and 2003.

## Subject

- All the DEUs have 10 types of subjects, 153 specialty and 18 thousand courses, including engineering, management, medicine, literature, sciences, agriculture, economics, education, law and philosophy, which cover senior vocational students and part of graduated students.



- Because of the limitation of experiment condition of scientist research, graduated students of MDE are few, and have great difficulty to get Master Degree.

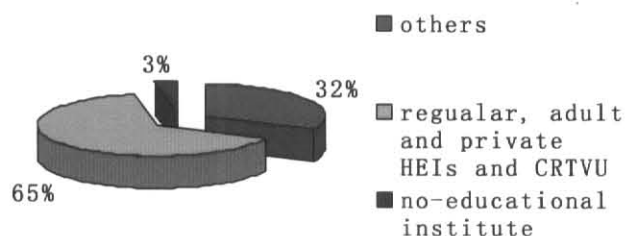
## Teaching Management Troops

From the stat. of 2003 :

- 3,360,000 staffs are engaged in the Modern Distance Educational Work of Experimental Unit, 190,000 of them work in campuses of experimental colleges , and 3,170,000 of them work in Learning Centres and public service systems outside the pilot university.
- 1,710,000 teachers work for Modern Distance Education, in which there are 150,000 full-time teachers and 1,560,000 part-time teacher.

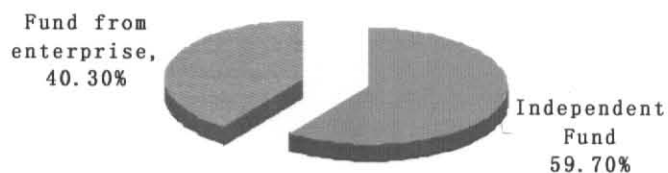
## Learning Centers

Year	2001	2002	2003
Number of learning center	966	2012	2393

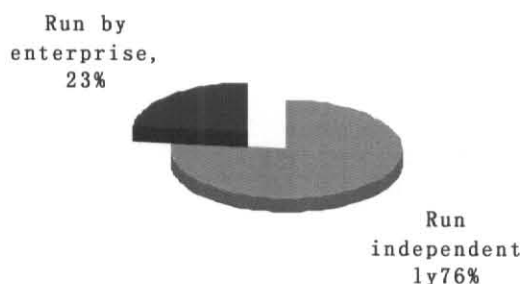


Percentage of different types of learning centers in 2003

## Source of fund and studding model



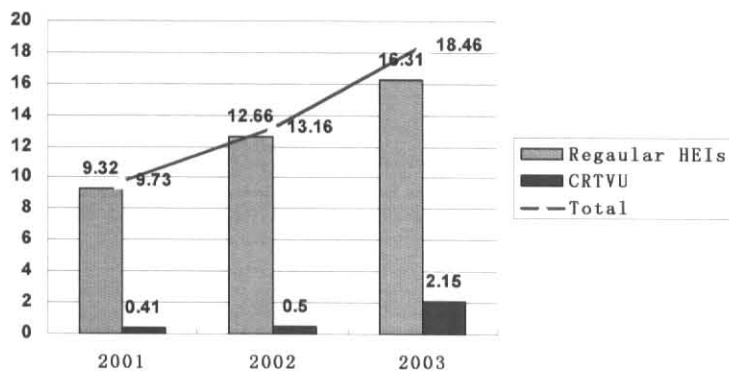
### Analysis of fund source model



### Analysis of Studding model

## Source of fund and studding model

Pilot universities total invested 1845 million RMB, among which CRTVU total invested 214.6 million RMB up to the end of 2003.



Unit: one hundred million RMB

## Hardware Set & Resources Developed

As for hardware environment construction, about 48% pilot HEI utilized satellite transmission system, and 57% pilot HEI equipped with video conference system.

By the end of 2002, there were 135 network platforms in 63 pilot HEI, among which 36% were developed by pilot HEI, and 24% were developed by cooperation between pilot HEI and organization outside school, and 22% were purchased from organization, others were unknown type.

By the end of 2003, about 12393 course wares were developed, including online courseware(for wide band or narrow band), Multimedia courseware, educational video tape and audio tape.

Year	Before 2002	2002	2003	Total
Num. Of Courseware	6433	2184	3776	12393
Regular HEI	6327	2151	3738	12216
CCRTVU	106	33	38	177

## Resources Developed

Resource Type	Total Num.	Num of Colleges with such type
Electronic Book	273081	29
Video Tape	420001	40
Compact Disk	724032	61
Tape	47904	25
Multimedia Classroom	773	64
Online Video Course Ware (Hours)	4899277	41
Satellite Transmission System	39	38
Telephone Conference	7	7
Audio Conference	11	11
Video Conference	36	36
E-Learning System	91	66

## Comparisons between China's DE and Abroad (1)

	Quality Accreditation	Risk taking	Structure with branches	Philosophy of leadership	Scale
China	Accredited by government	Small, Parent institution takes almost overall responsibility	hierarchy	Grounded in adult education, lack of Instructional Design	Very large, generally 10 thousand each organization
Other countries	Accredited by the third agency like regional or professional accreditation association	Large, Operate on their own	Contracted partnership and collaborative system	Grounded in educational technology and business management, directed by ID	Moderate, Interaction between tutor and learner is sufficient due to its bigger ratio of tutor and students



## Comparisons between China's DE and Abroad (2)

	Learner support	Technology used and resources	Society rating of DE effectiveness	Learners' competency	Vocational training
China	Stress on learning affairs management (logistic), less on academic guidance and consultation	Up-to-date facilities while lack of learning resources	Superior to traditional campus-based higher education	Lower degree in information literacy, cheating seriously during final examinations	Still in earlier stage compared with diploma and degree programs
Other countries	Learner-centered, offer both administrative and academic support	Integrated various tech., many free resources open through government initiatives	Equivalent to campus-based higher education	Competent in PC skills and learning skills, Cheating is not as common as Chinese learners	Extensively offered in various vocational programs

